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they hibernate in a warm one; that the flesh of the sponge is washed off merely by being drawn from the water; that the nettle-cells of the hydroids are shot out with inconceivable velocity to lasso the prey; that—but we forbear. We only hope and pray for a relief, or even a respite, from the continual shower of unnatural history which is being poured out upon a long-suffering world of science.

ON a former occasion we referred to the gross injustice which has been perpetrated by the State of Michigan in the matter of its late geologist, Professor Rominger. This gentleman, by economical methods, saved enough of his small appropriation to pay for the publication of his report. When the report was completed the State refused to publish it and retained the surplus in the treasury, where Professor Rominger had, with too great faith, allowed it to remain. The State should either publish the report or return the money to Professor Rominger. Michigan cannot afford a transaction like this to stain her history, and, in view of her general intelligence and liberality to learning, it is surprising that the injustice has not been corrected long ago.

WE understand that the fine exhibition of basaltic columns at Llewellyn Park, Orange, N. J., is undergoing destruction. It is being used as a quarry for paving and macadamizing material. This is to be greatly regretted, and we hope that the persons controlling the park will endeavor to put an end to the desecration. It is one of the principal attractions to visitors and residents in the neighborhood, and the authorities of the park will do well to see that it is preserved.

RECENT LITERATURE.

Trouessart's Microbes, Ferments, and Moulds.¹—This work is intended for the general reader, and not for the specialist in science. In the words of the author, "There is much to be done before modern society is practically on a level with the achievements of science; many prejudices must be uprooted, and many false notions must be replaced by those which are sounder and

¹ The International Scientific Series. *Microbes, Ferments, and Moulds*. By E. L. Trouessart. With one hundred and seven illustrations. New York, D. Appleton & Company, 1886. 12mo, pp. xii. 314.

more just." This is the laudable task the author sets before himself.

The general plan of the book may be understood from an enumeration of the headings of the several chapters, as follows: Parasitic Fungi and Moulds; Ferments and Artificial Fermentations; Microbes or Bacteria; Microbes of the Diseases of Domestic Animals; Microbes of Human Diseases; Protection against Microbes; Laboratory Research, and Culture of Microbes; Polymorphism of Microbes; The Microbian Theory compared with other Theories set forth to explain the Origin of Contagious Diseases.

In turning over these chapters, so admirably planned to accomplish the author's purpose, one is pained to note the evident want of acquaintance of the author with his subject. A book of this kind should have been intrusted to a specialist, who could have done something to popularize the difficult subject, and not to one who has no specialty, unless it be that of dabbling in everything, "palæontology, bibliography, zoology, general biology, geographical distribution, vertebrates, mammals, ornithology."¹ The result is a book which is so full of errors of interpretation as to greatly lessen its value.

It is difficult to criticise a book like this in detail, and it is perhaps needless, as no ordinary revision could eliminate its faults. Nothing less than a rewriting of most of the chapters would make the book what it should be. A few examples, however, will serve to show the kind of work done by the author. On page 11, we are told that in the mushroom "the part which we eat and call the umbrella represents the flower or floral peduncle of other plants." Fig. 18, which is intended to illustrate *Peronospora infestans*, is not that species at all, but evidently the one on the grape. Fig. 23 is printed upside down. On page 128 occurs a most marvellous jumble; an attempt is there made to discuss the cause of the red color which occasionally appear on ponds, and which is common on the snow in northern regions, and, astonishing as it may seem, *Protococcus* is regarded as a microbe!

It would be unfair to leave the impression that this book has no value whatever. It may prove to be to some mind the suggestion from which will eventually spring the desire to know more about the "infinitely little" things. Should it do so we should not condemn it too severely, although we might still wish that it had been more carefully prepared.—*Charles E. Bessey.*

Economic Fungology.²—Little attention has been given in

¹ See International Scientists' Directory, 1883.

² An Elementary Text-book of British Fungi. Illustrated by William Delisle Hay, F.R.G.S., author of "Brighter Britain," etc., etc. London, Swan, Sonneschein, Lowry & Co., Paternoster Square, 1887.